



Dragon Poles



ID Village Square with artistic benches and surfaces



Painted colonnades underneath the I-5 freeway



Tsutakawa's bronze art work

# Public Art

General Principle

- Respect the history and culture of the various communities that have settled in the District.
- Explore ways to demarcate this District, either through signage, historical markers, banners, gateways, murals, and other public art possibilities.
- Public art should be consistent with the history and cultural experiences of this community, consequently methods and policy guidelines should be in place with this in mind when hiring artists and historians.

Summary

Visual arts are evident throughout the District’s past. Colorful bilingual signage dating back to the early Seattle history, multi-ethnic art shows during Seafair celebrations in the 1950’s, and inclusions of artwork on new buildings built in the 1960s, such as the enamel mural by artist Fay Chong on the United Savings building at 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Jackson St are examples of the artwork in this Community.

Sources of funds over the years included private developers; urban design, parks and arts funding from government agencies (CIDPDA owns the building that houses the Wing Luke Asian Museum and NW Asian American Theatre), and community fundraising for multi-use facilities, such as the Asian Resource Center. Sometimes, foreign governments have contributed to public artwork, as in the case of Kobe Terrace Park and Hing Hay Park. Youth groups often participated in public art making, such as in the Chong Wa Play-ground mural and a couple of Metro bus shelters.



One of two bronze animals at the ID Village Square

Art in this community provides visual excitement to the streetscape and visual identification for visitors to the area. Public art also commemorates labor movements, as with the Carlos Bulosan Exhibit - a tribute to Filipino-American history and culture. Or gives children an animal to play on, like the dragon sculpture in the Children’s Park. Public art, however, also provides clues to a passersby, so they can identify the people and services housed within a site. In addition, innovative solutions are created when artists are involved in the design of a new building or park, adding different ideas and approaches to logistic puzzles, such as wayfinding in the ID Village Square.

Public Art Meeting/Input Summary

A meeting organized by Team member Mayumi Tsutakawa - who has worked on several art projects in the Community - regarding public art was held on November 12, 2002. The Design Team invited around fifteen artists and community organizers who have had experience working on public art projects in the District to take part in the discussion. They reviewed summaries of past projects and made recommendations for future projects. Nine persons, including our consultants, attended the meeting and seven persons sent input in writing.

Projects that were summarized included:

- Wing Luke Asian Museum façade improvements by Stewart Wong and Ron Ho
  - International District Village Square plaza walkway and benches, sculptures, lighting elements and artwork by Norie Sato, Hai Ying Wu and Stuart Nakamura
  - Suspended dragon sculptures on the perimeter of the area by Meng Huang and Heather Achey
- New projects that were discussed included the Chinatown gates proposed on King St. at 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>

Aves. A future project including a central signature artwork/minipark for Little Saigon was also discussed. Emphasis was placed on the need to identify, publicize, and maintain existing artworks in the area.

Summary of Public Art Comments:  
CAB Meetings and Community Workshops  
General

The District is multi-ethnic in nature, consequently its character is multifaceted and open to interpretation. There are many artistic methods to indicate the physical presence of the ethnic neighborhood. But we should also strive for a unified look in order to avoid a confusing visual jumble.

Overall, a visual symbol for the district is needed. This might combine Asian and water themes, which would expand on the Blue Ring plan’s ideas. Ultimately, we want to create an image unique from other Asian districts around the country. A water dragon and/or sea turtle are possibilities. Art depicting these themes (or related ones such as water canals, temples and fishing) could be used to promote neighborhood identity.



Mural at a Little Saigon Bus Stop

Emphasis should be placed on how public art should help demarcate the community. For example, public art at these locations demarcate Chinatown, Japantown, and Little Saigon: Jose Rizal bridge, 4<sup>th</sup> and/or 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., Jackson or Main Street, Dearborn Street, and the Bus Tunnel entrances. The proposed Chinatown Gateways will achieve this purpose as well. Residents and others say “Welcome signs” on the district perimeter are needed.



## Core Areas

Within the district itself, monuments should be installed in each part of the District symbolizing the cultural groups in each neighborhood. Murals could be painted on a variety of buildings for historical or cultural emphasis. Open spaces such as Hing Hay would benefit from public art opportunities when stools, kiosks, and pavement are replaced.

## Streets

On the streets, many interpretative artistic features could be placed or replaced, in order to reinforce a unified visual theme in the area. Banners or new signage can be used to state the neighborhood's presence. Likewise, kiosks and other wayfinding components distinctive to this neighborhood can be used. Specifically, Asian plants and trees can be planted and identified to note various Asian cultures in our neighborhood. Street furniture with distinctive Asian motifs could be designed by artists: benches, lanterns, utility poles, telephone booths, meters, tree supports, tree grates. Other street features such as fence/barricades, surface treatment on sidewalks and crosswalks, historical markers, hanging flower baskets, and/or planters could be added. Utility poles with the dragons should be painted contrasting colors, while the poles on King Street should be painted.

## Cultural activities

Activities or facilities needed to boost the cultural life of the District include: a Cultural Center for Little Saigon that includes a performance space. It would be desirable to revive the presence of the jazz clubs on Jackson St. and the community's Asian theaters for performing arts and Asian language film. Open-air and/or well-lit night-time markets with crafts as well as food would add to the cultural ambiance of the District.

## Recommendations



Pathways to Pride Project

**1. Chinatown gates proposed on King street at 5th and 8th Avenues.** The Chinatown Chinese Community Gate Committee have hired designers that will hold community based meetings to help refine the design of the gate.

**2. Little Saigon Corner.** Focus on the NW corner of 12th & Jackson with water feature, such as a fountain with a ceramic vase theme and/or relevant artwork. The entire Little Saigon streetscape area should be improved with unified landscaping, benches, bilingual street signs, a signature mural, and possibly, an information kiosk and children's minipark.

**3. Hing Hay Park.** The park should try to integrate a water feature or fountain. Existing features should be upgraded or repaired.

**4. Under the Freeway.** Columns on the King Street side, as well as any other unpainted columns should be painted like the Jackson Street side. The ceiling of the area should be painted also. The columns and painted space should be illuminated. High gloss paint should be used in all artwork. Sound art or music should be included in the area.

**5. Future artworks in the District.** These could include:

- Embedded designs and/or poetry on the sidewalks to note street names and/or addresses, which would create area identification.
- Artist designed street furniture such as benches and trash receptacles.
- Lighting to illuminate historic buildings at night, projected images on buildings at night, more lighting on trees.
- New banners in the area on the major streets.
- Public and privately developed buildings in the area and on the periphery should include artwork by Asian Pacific American artists.

- Enhance existing public art - the poles that hold the dragons can be painted.
- Encourage the collection and documentation of modern and contemporary artwork by APA artists.
- Form a district-wide art committee to provide artwork advice to developers and to carry forward these recommendations. In addition, seek and solicit artwork proposals from all Asian Pacific ethnic groups with a stake in the area.

## 6. Funding Ideas

Existing public art funds (1% or 1/2% coordinated by the government arts commissions) should be examined, perhaps pooled funds could be used.

- Set up a new fund to collect 1% of private construction funds.
- A tax like the one the BIA collects from business owners for safety purposes could be set up. Note that the City sets the level of this tax, so need to make art within the existing guidelines of public beautification.
- The City may have some funds to purchase open space land for the community.
- Department of Neighborhoods, Neighborhood Matching Fund.
- Income from parking fees, city or private.
- Private donations, for example, from Vulcan, Inc. or South Downtown Foundation, solicited through district-wide art committee.

**7. Set up a maintenance program** for any future public art project that the community initiates.

## Chinatown/Japantown/Little Saigon - International District Inventory Artworks

The following list of public artworks and visual design enhancements is meant to include those artworks that

are viewable by the public, publicly owned or publicly sited in the Chinatown/Japantown/Little Saigon - International District areas.

	Artwork	Artist(s)	Location	Provenance
1	Enamel mural	Fay Chong	United Savings Bank exterior, 6th and Jackson	Commissioned when the bank was built
2	Sculpture, bronze	George Tsutakawa	Street, Maynard and Jackson	Placed with City of Seattle street improvements funds
3	Wall mural	John Woo	Hing Hay Park, on the Bush Hotel	Donation by Seattle Arts Commission and Ackerly Co.
4	Pavilion	Traditional Chinese	Hing Hay Park, Maynard and King St.	Donated by Taiwan government when the park was built
5	Information Kiosk	Traditional Chinese	Hing Hay Park, on the corner	Chinatown Chamber of Commerce donate
6	Game benches	Hai Ying Wu	Five benches at Hing Hay Park, Maynard and King St.	Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) City of Seattle, US Bank, Safeco
7	Carlos Bulosan Memorial Exhibit, mural, historic photos, union display	Mural by Eliseo Art Silva, artist	Eastern Hotel, Maynard between King and Weller	NMF, City of Seattle

Public Artwork Inventory - Table 2

1. Enamel Mural



3,4. Wall Mural and Pavillion



5. Informational Kiosks



6. Game Benches



7. Carlos Bulosan Exhibit



9. Street Lantern



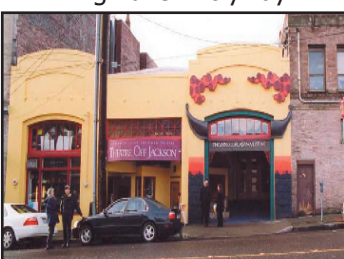
10. NP Japantown Display



11. Panama Japantown Display



12. Wing Luke Entryway



**Other Public Art Pictures**

2 . Bronze Sculpture - Introduction page of Public Art section

8. Stone Lantern- cover